तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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Difficulties with Others

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

The real fact is that if I am having any difficulty with others; that is my lack of Krishna consciousness, not theirs. Krishna says that his dearest devotee is one who does not put others into difficulty — in fact — who puts no one into difficulty.

— Letter to Madhukara. January 1973.

The Supreme Thief

Part Two

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

In the last issue, Mother Yasoda discovered that Lord Gopal had broken the pot of yoghurt and was feeding butter to the monkeys. Thus, she had decided to discipline him and had tied him up to the wooden grinding mortar.

Gopal's friends — Sridama, Madhumangal, Subal, and others — were standing at a distance. They could not come near because mother was very angry. They were getting so much pain in their hearts, "Oh, our friend is in bondage! How can we release him?" This is *sakhya-rasa*. Their dear friend was in bondage. Mother had bound him up to the wooden grinding mortar. They dared not come near because she was very angry, but they were thinking how to release their friend. Gopal looked at his friends standing at a distance. They gave a sign, and whispered, "Kanu, Kanu! Crawl down, crawl down, crawl down!" This is *sakhya-rasa*. They felt such compassion for their friend. They were thinking, "How will our friend be released?" Such a wonderful, wonderful mellow! The Supreme Lord, who cuts the material bondage of everyone, was in bondage! His friends, feeling pain in their hearts, were thinking, "How will our Kanu be released? He is our friend, *bandhu-jana*." They were never thinking of him as Bhagavan. Such a pure *rasa*, pure mellow! Looking at his friends, Gopal smiled; looking at mother, he cried.

Then Gopal crawled down into the courtyard. As he crawled between the two Arjun trees, the grinding mortar was rolling and it got stuck there sideways. Then the two Arjun trees were uprooted and they fell down with a great crash. Hearing this, Mother Yasoda, Nanda Maharaja, many cowherd men and *gopīs*, all came running. Everyone said, "What happened, what happened?" The cowherd boys spoke up, "We are eyewitnesses. Mother Yasoda bound him to a wooden grinding mortar. Kanu crawled down and these two trees were uprooted." Nanda Maharaja then released Krishna. Krishna's friends became very happy that Krishna was released.

Mother Yasoda said, "What happened to my Gopal? What happened? Two trees have fallen. What happened, what happened?" Now mother Yasoda is crying and crying, "Where is my Gopal? Where is my Gopal?" Mother Yasoda took Gopal onto her lap and went inside the room. Then Gopal started sucking the

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breast of his mother. This is *mādhurya-līlā*, such sweet, beautiful *līlā, vātsalya-rasa*. Some opulence was there, but it was hidden.

Gopal said, "Mother, what happened to you? Why are you crying?" There were tears in the eyes of mother Yasoda — *premāśru*, tears of love. She was thinking, "Oh why did I bind Gopal? Why did I bind Gopal?" She was lamenting and shedding tears. Gopal said, "Mother, what happened to you? Early in the morning you made me cry. I was sucking your breast and you put me on the ground. Then you went out and you made me cry. Now I made you cry. You are crying now." She was crying and Gopal was laughing. Gopal was on the lap of his mother, sucking her breast with much satisfaction. Taking his little hand, he was moving it on the face of mother Yasoda. There were tears in the eyes of the mother. As if giving consolation to his mother, the Lord gave blessings to his devotee. She was thinking, "I am such a rascal. I bound up my Gopal. Why did I bind up my Gopal?" She was thinking like this and shedding tears of love, *premāśru*. Such nice *līlā, bhakti-rasa*. This is *śuddha-bhāva,* pure *vātsalya-rasa*. Vrajeswari, mother Yasoda, bound Gopal. Who else can bind him?

It is natural for children to have this nature of stealing, so in his childhood days Krishna stole *mākhan*. When he grew up, in his *paugaṇḍa-līlā* between six and ten years of age, he stole the garments of the damsels of Vraja. He is the supreme thief, *caura-graganya*. He may steal you, only you are not worthy of stealing. If you prepare yourself, if you develop pure *prema-bhakti,* then Krishna will steal your heart. So during his childhood days, Krishna stole *mākhan* from the houses of the *gopīs*. In his *paugaṇḍa* age he stole the garments of the damsels of Vrajabhumi. And when he grew up a little bit in *kaiśora-kāla*, his boyhood days from eleven to fifteen, he stole the hearts of the *gopīs*. As *īśvara*, as the Supreme Lord, he also steals the *pāpa-tāpa,* the sin and afflictions of the *bhaktas*. He is such a thief — the supreme thief. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, antya* 7.30, describes:

> *śuddha-bhāve sakhā kare skandhe ārohaṇa*
> *śuddha-bhāve vrajeśvari karena bandhana*

In pure Krishna consciousness, a friend mounts the shoulder of Krishna, and mother Yasoda binds the Lord.

In pure *sakhya-rasa*, Krishna carries Sridama on his shoulders. They play; sometimes Krishna is defeated and Sridama wins. Then Krishna carries Sridama on his shoulders and runs around. Kaviraj Goswami explains in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, madhya* 9.214:

> *ananta brahmāṇḍa koṭi bahe jāre mane*
> *se tumi śrīdāma — gopa bahilā āpane*

Limitless millions of universes are manifested from your thoughts. Still, you personally carry the *gopa* Sridama.

No Need of a Bell

Again in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, madhya* 23.461-462, it is said:

> *je-se-dravya sevakera sarvabhāve khāya*
> *naivedhyādi vidhira o apekṣā nāhi cāya*
>
> *alpa dravya dāseo nā dile bale khāya*
> *tāra sākṣī brāhmaṇera khuda dvārakāya*

With great love the Lord at once eats whatever his servant offers. He has no desire to wait until all the rituals of offering are performed. If the devotee has very little food, and therefore does not offer it, the Lord eats it by force. Sudama *brāhmana's* broken rice in Dwarka bears witness to this truth.

This is pure love. In order to show affection to his devotees, Krishna sometimes snatches a morsel of food from the mouth of the devotee, such as in his dealings with his cowherd boy friends. This is done out of love. When the pure devotee offers something, immediately Krishna accepts. There is no need of ringing a bell or chanting mantras. Only pure love is required. All these *vidhis*, scriptural rules, are not needed. When the devotees make offerings to him with love, then there is no need of rituals. Krishna snatches away their offerings even if the devotees are not giving it.

There is the example of Sudama *vipra*, the poor *brāhmaṇa*. He went to Dwarka to see Krishna. He was very poor and had nothing in his house. He wanted to take something to Krishna, but he couldn't find anything to take. Finally, from a neighbor's house, his wife brought some very old chipped rice with a bad odor coming out. He bound it in his tattered clothes and took it with him. When he arrived in Dwarka, where Krishna is king, he found so much opulence there. Seeing all the opulence, he felt ashamed. He thought, "What have I brought? My friend Krishna has so much luxury. This chipped rice is so insignificant, how can I offer it to him?" So he hid it under his arm. However, Krishna knows everything. In the tenth canto of *Bhāgavata* (81.3) he asked Sudama:

kim upāyanam ānītaṁ brahman me bhavatā gṛhāt
aṇv apy upāhṛtaṁ bhaktaiḥ premṇā bhury eva me bhavet
bhūry apy abhaktopahṛtaṁ na me tonāya kalpate

Krishna said, "O my friend, O *brāhmaṇa* Sudama, you have brought something for me? What have you brought? Why are you not giving it to me? If it is very insignificant, still it is very great to me, because it is soaked with loving mellow. I only accept such a loving mellow, nothing else. One who is *abhakta,* not my devotee, even if he offers me so many things, in a big amount like a Himalayan mountain, I will never accept it. I only accept loving mellow. Even if my devotee offers a very insignificant thing, if it is offered with love and devotion then it means so much to me. So what have you brought for me? Why are you not giving it?"

Feeling ashamed, Sudama had hidden the rice under his arm. Perspiration is there. It is very old, spoiled chipped rice, now soaked with perspiration. If you taste it you would say, "Oh, paa, paa! There is a bad odor." Sudama was not giving it, so Krishna snatched the rice from him and took one handful, "Oh very nice, so sweet." If we would taste it we would say, "Oh, paa, paa! Salty, not good." But Krishna said, "Oh, so sweet, so nice." he took one handful, and when he was about to take another handful, the *Bhāgavata Mahā-purāṇa* (10.81.10) describes that Rukmini-devi, who is Lakshmi, the goddess of fortune, caught hold of Krishna's hand, saying, "Enough, enough."

iti muṣṭiṁ sakṛj jagdhvā dvitīyāṁ jagdhum ādade
tāvac chrīr jagṛhe hastaṁ tat-parā parameṣṭhinaḥ

After saying this, the Supreme Lord ate a palmful and was about to eat a second when the goddess Rukmini took hold of his hand.

When Krishna was about to take a second handful, Rukmini-devi caught hold of his hand and said, "Enough. Now I have to go and serve him. Taking this second handful, do you think that you'll hand me over to him? Enough."

This is pure loving mellow — *alpa dravya dāseo nā dile bale khāya (Cc. madhya* 23.462). Sudama felt ashamed, thinking, "How can I offer such an insignificant thing. Krishna has so much opulence." But Krishna snatched it away because it was offered out of love.

Pandava's Remnants

Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur describes in *Caitanya-bhāgavata (madhya* 23.463):

avaśene sevakere kare ātmāsāt
tāra sākṣī vanavāse yudhiṣṭhira śāka

The Lord also eats the remnants of his servant's meal. The vegetables of Yudhisthir when he lived in the forest bear witness to that truth.

Once Yudhisthir Maharaja, his brothers, and his wife Draupadi, were staying in the forest. Duryodhan sent Durvasa Muni to visit the Pandavas in the afternoon. "There will be no food there to feed him, so Durvasa will get angry, curse them, and they'll all burn to ashes." With that evil thought, Duryodhan sent him. But, *kṛṣṇa rakṣyati* — Krishna protects his devotees. The Pandavas are very dear devotees of Krishna. Who can harm them? So Krishna came. There was a problem for Draupadi. There was no food, so how could she feed the guests? Durvasa had come with thousands of disciples. "Who can save me from this danger?" She thought, "Only Krishna can." So she called "Krishna!" and Krishna came running from a distance, shouting, "Draupadi, Draupadi, Draupadi! I am very hungry! I am very hungry! Give me food!" Draupadi said, "Please listen." But Krishna said, "No, first give me food, then I'll listen." Draupadi replied, "That's my problem, there's no food." Krishna said, "No, there must be some food. Check the cooking pots. There must be something there."

That day, Draupadi had cooked some *śāk*, spinach. One tiny leaf was still there, stuck to the brim of the pot. At the time of washing it had not come off. Krishna said, "Oh, yes. There is something here." he took the one tiny leaf and ate it with much pleasure. "Oh, you gave me so much food! My stomach is heavy now." This is only love and nothing else.

Premi-bhakta

Such a *premī-bhakta,* who has bound up Krishna with the rope of love in his heart — Krishna belongs to him. Only he can give Krishna. *Caitanya-bhāgavata, madhya* 23.464-465, describes:

sevaka kṛṣṇera pitā, mātā, patnī, bhāi
'dāsa' bai kṛṣṇera dvitīya āra nāhi

The *premī-bhakta* is Lord Krishna's father, mother, wife, and brother. Lord Krishna does not consider his pure devotee at all different from his own self.

je rūpa cintye dāse sei rūpa haya
dāse kṛṣṇe karibāre pāraye vikraya

Krishna appears in the form that his dear devotee desires to see. He gives his devotees the power to sell him to others.

In *Śaraṇāgati (Bhajana-lālasā, song 7)*, Thakur Bhaktivinode has described:

kṛṣṇa se tomāra, kṛṣṇa dite pāro
tomāra śakati ache
āmi to' kāṅgāla 'kṛṣṇa' 'kṛṣṇa' boli
dhāi tava pāche pāche

O venerable vaiṣṇava, Krishna is yours. You have the power to give him to me. I am simply running behind you shouting, "Krishna! Krishna!"

Who can give Krishna? Only one who has gotten Krishna. Otherwise, who can give if he has not gotten? Can he give? No. Only a *premī-bhakta* can give Krishna. No one else. The four Vedas sing that Krishna, the Supreme Lord, is *sevaka-vatsala*, very dear to his servants. He is *bhakta-vatsala*. Krishna manifests Himself before such *premī-bhaktas*. He is always with them. *Caitanya-bhāgavata, madhya* 23.466, says:

sevaka vatsala prabhu' cāri vede gāya
sevakera sthāne kṛṣṇa prakāśe sadāya

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead loves his servants." The Vedas sing thus. Lord Krishna always appears before his devotees.

These are such loving pastimes. They are wonderful, very excellent, and inconceivable.

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Both Bhagavan and *bhakta* get pleasure. Krishna is *prīti-vinaya*, the object of love, whereas the *premī-bhakta* is *prīti-āśraya*, the abode of love. So Bhagavan, being the object of the *āśraya*, cannot understand what relishment, what pleasure, the *bhakta* gets. The relishment and happiness the *bhakta* gets is *āśraya-jātīya*, in the *āśraya* category. Krishna cannot understand it because it is in the *āśraya* category, whereas Krishna is of the *viṣaya* category. This is the specific language.

Srila Krishna Das Kaviraj Goswami describes in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, antya* 18.16-17:

bhakta-premāra yata daśā, ye gati prakāra
yata duḥkha, yata sukha, yateka vikāra

kṛṣṇa tāhā samyak nā pāre jānite
bhakta-bhāva aṅgīkare tāhā āsvādite

Krishna Himself cannot fully understand the conditions, the mode of progress, the happiness and unhappiness, and the moods of ecstatic love of his devotees. He therefore accepts the role of a devotee to taste these emotions fully.

In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami writes in this way. What is the condition of a *premī-bhakta?* What is his happiness? What is his distress? What is his mood? Krishna cannot understand it. In order to understand it, Krishna accepts the mood of a *bhakta* and comes here to relish it. So Krishna, accepting the mood of a *bhakta*, comes as Gauranga Mahaprabhu, *bhakta-rūpa*, in order to relish this *bhakti-rasa, āśraya-jātīya-rasa* — the mellow of the *āśraya* category. This is such wonderful *līlā!*

— Adapted from chapter four of *Mathura Meets Vrindavan.* Gopal Jiu Publications. Bhubaneswar. 2002.

HEARING AND CHANTING

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 10.529

mat kathāḥ kurute yas tu vaiṣṇavānāṁ sadāgrataḥ
iha bhogān avāpnoti tathā mokṣaṁ na saṁśayaḥ

[Quoting a conversation between Krishna and Arjuna in Skanda Purāṇa:] Those who always listen to my transcendental glories from other *vaiṣṇavas* and chant them as well shall enjoy this world properly and without doubt attain the supreme liberation.

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